

## Lessons Learned Record of Interview

<b>Project Title</b>					
LLP01 – Strategy and Planning					
<b>Interview Code:</b>					
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<b>SIGAR Attendees:</b>					
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Matthew Sternenberger, Research Analyst, 8/11/2015					
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Comments on Sources and Research</li> <li>• PRTs and CERP</li> <li>• Varied Approaches: ASI and COIN</li> <li>• Research and Limitations</li> <li>• Policy Attitudes</li> <li>• Follow-up Actions</li> </ul>					

### Initial Comments on Sources and Research

(a) *“Without the NSC documents we simply can’t construct a history of strategic reviews.”* We sent a letter to the White House months ago to request access to the Bush Library, as we still have not heard back. I have been adrift in a sea of policy issues. My focus now is the political end states and objectives. Having the Strategic Reviews would be key but can’t find them. So far it seems that Karzai, Rumsfeld and USAID all have their own priorities.

(b) There was incoherence and preemption concerning the goals versus strategies, and reconstruction versus COIN. For example the 1230 report released in 2008 called for COIN, it was not until 9 months later that the Commander then calls for COIN himself and seems to be credited with calling for it. As for reconstruction, it was called for 2003 with the Afghanistan Reconstruction Group, but it was not until 2005 that they followed through with this recommendation. Things always take ten times as long and twice as much to accomplish.

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(a) It was hard for the administrations to do what they said they would do and it was hard for them to come to terms with what CT even means. There was also an early insistence on relying on allies, which was just silly. The U.S. Army is now doing everything from reconstruction to Rule of Law. Rumsfeld kept everyone in Kabul and was scared of the detention issue.

***"You can't build a nation underpinned with Rule of Law while at the same time undermining it [Rule of Law]."***

(a) I am looking at what op orders were saying to do and using them to chart mission creep. I will then contextualize that with the NSC policy decisions.

### **PRTs and CERP**

(b) Another piece we are looking at are PRTs and that interagency process with State. In Kandahar, for example, there was a PRT with two State lawyers and then about eight JAG officers. We are looking at this as whether it is a path for future operations. Does State think this is a good model for the future? Without security can we still stabilize? As for CERP, we flooded way too much money in and did it destroy what we were doing? Should we have done nothing or be an occupier? Is there even a middle option?

(a) PRTs were received favorably by State and they think it is a model that is organizationally sustainable.

(b) Well we only had 1,000 people in the whole country and many thought the teams were too close to the military. Being that close can taint what you are doing.

(a) We are having constant resource struggles. The structure of our report will be mainly at the operational level and be split into the following time periods: 2001, 2002-2005, 2006-2008, 2009-2011 and 2012-2014. We will then have subsections in each period focused on the strategy, the enemy, Special Forces, and RSM/NUG.

(a) There will be a focus on CJSOTF-180 and post-Anaconda, which was a watershed moment. I can probably provide something similar to an executive summary to you [SIGAR] in a few weeks.

### **Varied Approaches: NSC Accelerating Success Initiative and COIN**

(a) I have not seen the Accelerating Success Initiative laid out anywhere. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

COIN underwent a change. Over at George Mason University, they were looking at the number of troops to population but there was no dependent variable to predicting success. There was a void. So who is worth what? Is one U. S. soldier as meaningful as one ANP? Petraeus just liked COIN because it was in vogue while he was with the Joint Staff. I believe they thought they were doing what was right - the Colin Powell Doctrine with showing large troop numbers, McKiernan with the population-centric COIN.

### **Research and Limitations**

(a) I am using draft memos now, but can't use those moving forward. I have mined Feith's memoir and his attempted defense of the policies. I am looking at why it took a year for the Afghan Freedom Support Act to go through. AFSA is unique in its mission statement and the new objectives it presents.

(b)(5)

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***Infrastructure and the remoteness of the provinces hindered our efforts and decision making was based on personal anecdotes. There was no systemic analysis"***

### **Policy Attitudes**

(b) They were all searching for a silver bullet. Rumsfeld was telling DOD to turn Afghanistan over to NATO so that they [the U.S.] could focus on Iraq.

(a) We failed to appreciate the deep impact of regime change. Early on it was low cost, low casualty and we were able to move freely. We then decided not to invest and instead make the allies pick up the bill. The NSC was not looking for policy issues until 2002 or 2003.

(b) Rumsfeld was asking why this [Afghanistan] was not gone yet.

(a) ASI basically was saying we should pave roads and register people to vote. I read something that we were supposed to be out of Afghanistan by 2007. Then violence started to ramp up. This was post-Bonn and Rumsfeld then pushes for a wider presence in Afghanistan and in 2006 finally came to the realization that things may be worse than he thought.

(b) ***"Afghanistan was not a top-10 issue for the Bush-era."***

(b) The Joint History Office has most or all of the NIEs on the SIPR side (talk with (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)).

(a) Croker just wanted to support Musharraf.

(b) COIN happened because a Four Star [general] said to do it. One brigade commander in Kandahar called it "counter-guerilla".

(a) ***"There were too many people, with too many agendas, and they were not talking to each other."***

(b) McChrystal then does an assessment without input from the Embassy. The Eikenberry cable follows. We should have done a joint assessment and Eikenberry being former military did not help as it should have.

### **Follow-up Actions**

- (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)